

Chapter 2: Comments Received on the Draft SEIS

The Draft SEIS was released on March 31, 2004 and comments were accepted until May 7, 2004. Each comment received was numbered and given an individual response. Responses to each comment correspond to the numbering system in the left-hand margin of each comment letter. The full set of comments received is presented in numerical order at the end of this chapter. Responses to comments follow.

Response to Sol Israel (Comment #1)

1. Comment noted. Business owners affected by the project will be compensated for any property or structural loss according to fair market value. It is anticipated that providing additional connections in Downtown will allow more pedestrian, bicycle, and local vehicle traffic to access Downtown businesses. Providing additional connections will allow more access to parcels and is expected to stimulate economic activity in Downtown.

Response to Anonymous (Comment #2)

1. Your preference for the No Action Alternative because it “would not impact herons” is noted. Discussion of impacts to herons under the various alternatives is included in the *Plants, Animals, and Wetlands* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-21 to 3-34).
2. The build alternatives are designed to accommodate future traffic levels through the year 2022. All of the build alternatives would adequately handle projected future traffic levels.
3. The Bear Creek Parkway Extension is intended to allow for more pedestrian, bicycle, and local vehicle traffic on the core Downtown streets. The BNSF corridor is intended to be the primary east-west bicycle connection through Downtown.
4. Your preference for a park/open space in the Safeco parcel is noted. The future use of this parcel is beyond the scope of this SEIS.
5. Your comment that “open space is eliminated” under Alternative 1 is noted. Impacts to open space are discussed in the *Plants, Animals, and Wetlands* (pages 3-21 to 3-34) and *Recreation* (pages 3-72 to 3-80) sections of the Draft SEIS.
6. The Leary Way bridge would remain open to traffic during construction, although lane closures would likely be required. The construction period for the bridge would likely be less than one year.
7. Comment that “some of the only large trees left in Downtown Redmond will be cut down” under Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 is noted. All trees and other vegetation lost as a result of the project will be replaced according to City guidelines. Discussion of impacts on trees and other vegetation is included in the *Plants, Animals, and Wetlands* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-21 to 3-34).
8. A benefit of the Alternative 2 alignment is the redistribution of traffic away from Redmond Way to the proposed Bear Creek Parkway Extension. This rerouting of trips reduces the expected demands at Leary Way/W. Lake Sammamish Parkway (via Old Redmond Road) and thereby is expected to reduce congestion on the stated arterials.
9. See Response #7.
10. See Responses #7 and #8

11. The extension of Bear Creek Parkway has been a planned link in the Redmond street network for many years. It is listed in the *Redmond Comprehensive Plan* (RCP, City of Redmond 1995:124) as a needed project. A Transportation Facilities Plan is included in the Comprehensive Plan, which outlines the specific projects and improvements needed over the next 12 to 15 years to achieve transportation service goals. The Bear Creek Parkway Extension is part of the Transportation Facility Plan (TFP), listed as project RED-TFP-050a. It appears on the TFP Map (TR-3A) and Table (TR-5) as a minor arterial to be constructed. The City Center element is also included in the Comprehensive Plan, which includes a Long-Range Transportation Plan specifically for the Downtown area. The City Center Arterial Street Plan (Map CC-3) shows the Bear Creek Parkway Extension as a collector arterial.

The recently completed *Downtown Transportation Master Plan* (DTMP, 2002) also confirmed the need for this link in the Downtown street network. This Plan's goal is to develop a transportation concept for Downtown Redmond that enhances mobility and economic vitality, and maintains a people-friendly environment. The DTMP culminated in an Action Agenda for Implementation, which outlines specific projects needed to achieve the Downtown Redmond vision. Because some aspects of the Action Agenda depend on completion of the Bear Creek Parkway connection, the City Council has elected to pursue the selection of an alignment for Bear Creek Parkway as a priority decision.

12. Decisions on future bus routes and stops are made by those service providers and are beyond the scope of the SEIS. Alternatives 3 and 4 would provide a more direct connection from SR 520 to the Park and Ride, but the decision to use this connection would be up to the individual transit service providers.

Response to Anonymous (Comment #3)

1. Comment that "Alternative 2 seems the best balance" is noted.
2. It is not anticipated that the Bear Creek Parkway Extension would require the whole City transportation budget.
3. Comment that Alternatives 3 and 4 are "a waste of money" is noted.
4. The costs of Alternative 1 are related to the amount of earth excavation required, reconfiguration of the existing stormwater ponds, acquisition of right-of-way along 159th Place NE, and costs associated with widening Leary Way (including the bridge).
5. Comment that there is no unacceptable alternative is noted.

Response to Timon Sinclair (Comment #4)

1. Your preference for the No Build Alternative or Alternative 2 is noted.

Response to Laurie D'Alessandro (Comment #5)

1. Your preference for Alternative 3 is noted.
2. Your comment that Alternative 1 is unacceptable because it is "not cost effective and has negative impacts to business owners on 159th" is noted. All alternatives will have impacts to businesses – either along 159th Place NE or along Redmond Way/Cleveland Street in Downtown. Impacts to businesses are discussed in the *Land Use* section (pages 3-44 to 3-56) of the Draft SEIS.

Response to Anonymous (Comment #6)

1. Your preference for Alternative 4 is noted.
2. Your comment that Alternative 1 is unacceptable is noted.

Response to Kris Colt (Comment #7)

1. Your preference for Alternative 2 or 4 is noted.
2. Your preference for Alternative 4 because of its additional vehicle options is noted. Your preference for no crossing of the BNSF trail is noted. Your desire to make this crossing (if required) safe for trail users is noted. Crossing of the future BNSF trail would be designed concurrently with the trail and would ensure the safety of trail users.
3. Your comment that Alternative 1 is unacceptable because “it crosses the open space and bisects it” is noted. Impacts to open space are discussed in the *Plants, Animals, and Wetlands* (pages 3-21 to 3-34) and *Recreation* (pages 3-72 to 3-80) sections of the Draft SEIS.
4. No bicycle lanes are proposed on the Bear Creek Parkway Extension, because according to the Downtown Transportation Master Plan the BNSF corridor is proposed as the primary east-west bicycle connection through Downtown. However, bicycle lanes could be considered during design of the roadway, particularly for the north-south connections proposed as part of Alternatives 3 and 4.

Response to Barbara Dickson (Comment #8)

1. Your preference for the No Build Alternative is noted. All of the build alternatives are designed for the 20-year future horizon. The recently completed Downtown Transportation Master Plan serves to guide overall transportation improvements in Downtown over the next 20 years, including improvements to the east end of Downtown. The City is currently updating the City-wide Transportation Master Plan, which will consider improvements to Downtown and other areas of Redmond as a whole.
2. Your preference for Alternative 2 “since (we) need something now” is noted. Your preference for not crossing the BNSF corridor is noted, as is your preference for keeping traffic out of the “main areas” of Redmond. One of the project’s overall goals is to create an alternative route for east-west traffic. This would allow the Downtown core to serve more local traffic, transit, pedestrians, and bicycles. Projected future traffic patterns are discussed in the *Transportation* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-85 to 3-123).
3. Your comment that Alternative 1 is unacceptable due to “killing open space just created” and for “no purpose” is noted. Impacts to open space are discussed in the *Plants, Animals, and Wetlands* (pages 3-21 to 3-34) and *Recreation* (pages 3-72 to 3-80) sections of the Draft SEIS.
4. The Bear Creek Parkway Extension project and the BSNF corridor project are both elements of the Downtown Transportation Master Plan that the City desires to implement.
5. Your desire to “make a circular roadway around downtown” is noted. Bear Creek Parkway is intended to provide an additional connection for east-west traffic, allowing the Downtown core streets to be more pedestrian friendly and to better accommodate local traffic.

Response to Jane Stensland (Comment #9)

1. Your preference for Alternative 4 because it has the “best traffic circulation” is noted. Projected future traffic patterns are discussed in the *Transportation* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-85 to 3-123).
2. Your comment that Alternative 1 is unacceptable because it “goes through property I am associated with and will damage it greatly” is noted. Impacts to businesses are further discussed in the *Land Use* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-44 to 3-56).

Response to Anonymous (Comment #10)

1. Your preference for Alternative 2 because it is “most direct and least disruptive of existing businesses” is noted.
2. Your comment that Alternative 4 is unacceptable because of “too much disruption and (because it is) too costly for the benefit gained” is noted.
3. Your comment to “save natural areas” is noted.

Response to Anonymous (Comment #11)

1. Your preference for the No Build Alternative because you “don’t see a pressing need” is noted. Your concern regarding herons, Slough House Park, and the Sammamish River are also noted. No impacts to Slough House Park or the Sammamish River are anticipated. Impacts to herons have been considered and documented in consultation with wildlife regulatory and preservation agencies. These issues are discussed in the *Plants, Animals, and Wetlands* (pages 3-21 to 3-34), *Recreation* (pages 3-70 to 3-79) and *Water* (pages 3-13 to 3-20) sections of the Draft SEIS.

Response to Bertha Eades (Comment #12)

1. Your preference for the No Build Alternative is noted. Although improved transit connections are a benefit of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension, the project’s primary purpose is to provide an additional connection for east-west vehicle traffic and to allow the core Downtown streets to be more pedestrian friendly and serve more local traffic. Although a more direct connection to the Downtown Park and Ride on NE 83rd St. is highlighted as a benefit of Alternatives 3 and 4, as you have stated, transit service providers are responsible for making decisions about future bus routes and stops.
2. The benefit to non-motorized users is intended to be reduced traffic on core Downtown streets such as Redmond Way and Cleveland Street, allowing these streets to become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Bear Creek Parkway itself is not intended to serve as a bicycle facility.
3. Freight mobility would likely be improved for several of the alternatives, based on the anticipated travel time savings for both local and through traffic (comparing the No Build Alternative to some of the build alternatives). Most freight-related trips to/from major commercial destinations would be made via SR 520. However, trips to/from the Downtown area and immediately adjacent neighborhoods could benefit from the proposed extension.
4. Your preference for a two-way Redmond Way with a pedestrian bridge is noted. These improvements are beyond the scope of this SEIS.

Response to Terry Lavender (Comment #13)

1. Your preference for Alternative 3 and the No Action Alternative as a second choice is noted. Although Alternative 3 does improve traffic flow in some areas, it shows a deterioration in traffic flow in some areas compared to the No Action Alternative.
2. The presence of Chinook salmon in the Sammamish River and Bear Creek is noted in the Draft SEIS. It is not anticipated that any of the build alternatives would negatively impact water quality or salmon habitat. Although Alternative 3 does involve the least amount of land disturbance, it would have an impact on some forest habitat near Leary Way and the existing 162nd Avenue NE intersection (similar to Alternatives 2 and 4).
3. Your desire to preserve the trees at the south end of Town Center is noted. None of the alternatives are anticipated to affect any trees in this area.
4. Your suggestion to remove the sidewalk on the south side of the proposed typical section to allow for more space for vegetation is noted. This may be a feasible option and will be considered during project design.

Response to Tim McGruder (Comment #14)

1. Your preference for the No Action Alternative is noted.
2. Your comment that Alternative 1 would avoid the heron rookery is noted. Impacts to the open space and ponds as habitat for other species under Alternative 1 is discussed in the Draft SEIS (*Plants, Animals, and Wetlands*, pages 3-21 to 3-34) and your concern for this habitat is noted. The City has completed additional study of the wildlife species supported by the open space area. These results are presented in Chapter 3 of the FSEIS.
3. Your support for Alternative 4 because it avoids impacts and fragmentation of the open space is noted.
4. Your concern for the heron rookery is noted. A map showing the heron nests (as they were located in 2003) and the proposed alignment for Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 has been produced and is included in Appendix B of the FSEIS. This map was presented to a representative from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Response to Linda Hussey (Comment #15)

1. Your preference for the No Action Alternative because “the other alternatives impact the environment and businesses too much” is noted.
2. Your comment that “people need to change their ways and get out of their cars or carpool” is noted.
3. See Response #1. Discussion of the environmental and business impacts of all alternatives is discussed in detail in the Draft SEIS.
4. Your preference for improving the east end of Bear Creek Parkway is noted. The analysis of these alternatives assumed that improvements to the east end (as identified in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan) would be implemented. A detailed assessment of those improvements and their associated impacts would be conducted under a separate study at the time those improvements are implemented.

Your suggestions for removing the proposed sidewalk and median will be considered during final project design. Separation of traffic with the existing median is a safety issue

that will be weighed appropriately. Pedestrian crosswalk facilities would be provided at all signalized intersections.

5. Your comments were forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

Response to Anonymous (Comment #16)

1. A Biological Assessment (BA) was not completed because the project is not anticipated to require compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. If compliance is required (for example through the federal permitting process), a BA will be completed for the Preferred Alternative.
2. Comments regarding the public meeting are noted.

Response to Beryl Standley (Comment #17)

1. Your preference for the No Action Alternative is noted. Your concern for impacts to the east end of Bear Creek Parkway is also noted. The analysis of these alternatives assumed that improvements to the east end (as identified in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan) would be implemented. A detailed assessment of those improvements and associated impacts would be conducted under a separate study at the time those improvements are implemented.
2. Pedestrian crosswalk facilities would be provided at all signalized intersections.
3. The analysis assumed no new signals along Bear Creek Parkway under any of the alternatives. However, the need for new signals will be revisited during final project design.
4. The Bear Creek Parkway Extension would continue to provide access to Redmond Town Center. Increased use of the roadway would likely be a benefit to businesses, because more traffic would be carried adjacent to Town Center and would be more likely to patronize Town Center businesses.
5. Your dislike of all alternatives is noted.
6. Your concern for the project expense is noted. According to the Downtown Transportation Master Plan, Redmond Way and Cleveland Street are not intended to carry through traffic. These streets are intended to become smaller facilities designed primarily for local traffic, pedestrians, and bicycles. The through traffic is intended to use Bear Creek Parkway once a more direct connection to Redmond Way on the west end is completed.
7. The study performed extensive traffic modeling and analysis that shows how the various alternatives would affect traffic patterns in and around Downtown. The project's goal is to provide an additional option for traffic that does not intend to stop and shop in Redmond, allowing the core Downtown streets to better accommodate individuals who do want to stop.

Response to Ray Anspach (Comment #18)

1. Your comments on the usefulness of the visual aids at the public meeting are noted.
2. Your dislike of all the alternatives is noted.
3. The proposed location of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension (near but not within the Downtown core) was chosen for several reasons. First, its location outside the Downtown core provides an additional option for east-west traffic that does not wish to be in the Downtown core (e.g. cross-town and regional traffic). By providing an

additional option, the core streets are allowed to function primarily for local traffic, pedestrians, and bicycles, which enhances the accessibility of Downtown businesses and amenities for those who wish to be there.

However, by being relatively close to Downtown, the Bear Creek Parkway also provides an additional connection to Downtown, which effectively expands the Downtown grid and provides additional access to Downtown parcels. This makes these parcels more attractive to development, because they are more accessible to vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles. Alternatives 2 and 4 provide these connections most effectively. Alternative 1, because it is located closer to SR 520, actually attracts traffic off of SR 520 in the traffic model.

The business impacts on 159th Place NE are described in the "Land Use" section of the Draft EIS (pages 3-44 to 3-56). This section includes a discussion of displacements and impacts on parking. Your mention of these impacts is noted.

4. Your comment regarding impacts on open space, trees, and the Saturday Market are noted. Impacts to these resources are discussed in detail in the Plants, Animals, and Wetlands (pages 3-21 to 3-34), and Recreation (pages 3-71 to 3-80) sections of the Draft SEIS. Alternative 1 does impact the open space area. Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 all impact some trees and a portion of the parcel currently used for the Saturday Market. Any trees or other vegetation lost as a result of the project will be replaced according to City guidelines.
5. The alternative you propose is similar to the proposal listed in the Redmond Comprehensive Plan Transportation Facilities Plan #RED-TFP-050c. This proposed project is to provide a new three- to four-lane bridge at NE 72nd Street from Bear Creek to W. Lake Sammamish Parkway. This project has been studied extensively over the last fifteen years. A summary of the results of these studies is included in the technical memo entitled Task B3: Assessment of a Bear Creek Parkway Bypass via West Lake Sammamish Parkway, prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff in June 2003 and included as Appendix C of the Final SEIS. This paper concludes that this particular alignment would result in severe degradation of traffic movement on W. Lake Sammamish Parkway between the new connection and Leary Way and would require additional widening of this facility. Even if widened to eight lanes, W. Lake Sammamish Parkway would continue to experience significant congestion in the year 2020. Additional detail is provided in the report.
6. This connection is further from Downtown and therefore could be considered "less intrusive" on Downtown. However, because it is closer to SR 520 and further from Downtown, the W. Lake Sammamish connection is anticipated to attract traffic off of SR 520 and to add additional trips to W. Lake Sammamish Parkway. Because of this, it ceases to function primarily as an additional option for east-west traffic across Downtown.
7. See Response #5 and the technical memorandum in Appendix C for a thorough discussion of the traffic impacts of the W. Lake Sammamish Parkway connection.
8. The W. Lake Sammamish Parkway connection would have fewer impacts on the Town Center open space than Alternative 1, but more impacts than Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 and would also impact the Sammamish River and Bear Creek Trails. It would not, as you mention, impact any large trees, the Saturday market, or the heron rookery, although it would impact areas where herons are known to forage for food.
9. Comment noted. The W. Lake Sammamish Parkway connection would not require business acquisitions.

10. See Response #7. The benefits for transit depend on where transit service is routed. If service is routed into Redmond Town Center, this alternative may provide some travel time savings. If transit is routed directly to the Downtown Park-and-Ride lot, Alternatives 3 and 4 would provide more benefit.
11. See Response #7. Neither Alternatives 2, 3, nor 4 propose widening the Leary Way bridge. The widening proposed as part of Alternative 1 is required due to the proximity of the new Bear Creek Parkway/Leary Way intersection to the bridge and a need for a right-turn lane to Bear Creek Parkway.
12. Comment noted. Aesthetically, this connection would be similar to Alternative 1 in that it would add asphalt to an area currently occupied by open space.
13. Comment noted. Gateway opportunities would be provided with any of the build alternatives.
14. Comment noted. A new bridge from Bear Creek Parkway to W Lake Sammamish Parkway would likely shorten the distance to/from Marymoor Park for pedestrians and bicycles.
15. Although the new bridge location may provide the opportunity for a small park, it would also affect existing open space, which is already designated as a community amenity. A bridge near the confluence of the Sammamish River and Bear Creek could have many potential environmental impacts, not only on the open space it would occupy but also on water quality, salmon and other wildlife habitat, and the area's existing trail facilities.
16. The Master Plan for the Riverwalk project includes a Southern Gateway just north of Leary Way. Extending Riverwalk is outside the scope of this project. The Riverwalk project is currently linked to Town Center via the Sammamish River and Town Center Trails. Although the bridge could be modeled on the 90th Street example, the design would still need to be specific to the location in terms of topography, traffic, and environmental considerations.
17. The W. Lake Sammamish Parkway connection, although not estimated in the same manner as the other alternatives, was estimated to cost between \$30 and \$40 million. This is primarily due to the difficulty of terrain, the structural costs associated with the bridge, the costs of the necessary additional widening of W. Lake Sammamish Parkway, and a new northbound ramp connection from W. Lake Sammamish Parkway to Redmond Way.
18. Comment noted.
19. See Response #17 above. Costs for the W. Lake Sammamish Parkway connection are estimated to be similar to the Bear Creek Parkway Extension alternatives.
20. See Responses #5, #16, #17, and the technical memo in Appendix C.

Response to Carol Sarna, Nelson Properties (Comment #19)

1. Your preference for Alternative 4 is noted. Your desire for phasing (“building the east-west portion first followed by the north-south connection”) is also noted. Opportunities for phasing of design and construction of the project will be explored during project implementation.

2. Comment noted. The Downtown Transportation Master Plan includes the additional Bear Creek Parkway connection and the conversion the Redmond/Cleveland couplet to two-way operations.
3. Your comment regarding the need for a “bypass for cross-town traffic” is noted. Your desire for such an alternative to “meet the needs of Downtown businesses and shoppers” is also noted. One of the project’s overall goals is to create an alternative route for east-west traffic. This would allow the Downtown core to serve more local traffic, transit, pedestrians, and bicycles. Projected future traffic patterns are discussed in the *Transportation* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-85 to 3-123). There may be a potential need to restrict some turning movements to maintain reasonable levels of mobility.
4. Your preference for an alignment that uses a portion of 159th Place NE is noted. Your desire for Alternative 4 and the conversion of the one-way couplet is noted. The Bear Creek Parkway Extension project and the Redmond/Cleveland couplet conversion are both elements of the Downtown Transportation Master Plan that the City desires to implement.
5. Your comment that the No Build Alternative is unacceptable because “the City’s downtown businesses are currently impacted by too much cross through traffic and if nothing is done, it will only get worse” is noted. Transportation analysis shows increased congestion and levels of delay in the 20-year horizon under the No Action Alternative. These conditions are expected to improve overall under any of the build alternatives. Projected future traffic patterns are discussed in the *Transportation* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-85 to 3-123).
6. Your desire to make the Bear Creek Parkway Extension and the “SR 202 eastbound from the connection at 522” projects priorities is noted. Decisions on implementation priorities for these and other projects are future decisions to be made by City of Redmond staff and City Council.
7. Your desire for bike paths from SR 520 to Bear Creek Parkway is noted. This is beyond the scope of this project.
8. Your request that the Bear Creek Parkway project be “moved up on the City’s priority list for funding” is noted. See Response #6.

Response to Redmond Board of Park Commissioners (Comment #20)

1. Your opposition to “any alternative that would impact the Redmond Town Center Open Space” is noted. Impacts to the open space are discussed in Plants, Animals, and Wetlands (pages 3-21 to 3-34) and Recreation (pages 3-72 to 3-80) sections of the Draft SEIS.
2. Your preference for the No Action Alternative is noted.
3. The Draft SEIS included assessment of the impacts of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension project on the Redmond Town Center Open Space and the heron rookery, both from a recreational and a wildlife habitat perspective. The Final SEIS includes additional discussion of these impacts (Chapter 3). The level of information presented in the SEIS was sufficient to compare the impacts of the various alternatives.

Should the Bear Creek Parkway project should be subject to permitting by a federal agency such as the US Army Corps of Engineers, a Biological Evaluation/Assessment (BE/A) would be completed for compliance with the Endangered Species Act. The BE/A would describe the impacts of the Preferred Alternative on any threatened or endangered species or their habitat, including salmon or any protected species utilizing the open space.

4. It is unclear whether increasing traffic volumes in the vicinity of the heron rookery will be harmful to the colony. The colony has historically chosen to nest near areas of traffic, pedestrian, and construction activity, and has experienced no significant impact. There is no data available that conclusively demonstrates the impacts of roadway construction or operation on herons. The Preferred Alternative will take all reasonable and feasible measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts to herons, including constructing only outside the breeding season and closely monitoring heron behavior.
5. Potential signals along Bear Creek Parkway (e.g., at 166th Ave NE) would be considered during project design. Based on projected volumes at the Bear Creek Parkway/166th Ave NE intersection, future signalization of this location may be pursued. With regard to the east end of Bear Creek Parkway, improvements to the (eastern) Bear Creek Parkway/Redmond Way intersection are recommended in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan. These improvements were assumed to be in place as part of the SEIS evaluation, in order to accommodate the anticipated increase in peak-hour traffic volumes and the shift of the major through-traffic stream to Bear Creek Parkway. To provide additional capacity on Redmond Way (SR 202), the bridge crossing just west of the SR 520 interchange would require physical widening for new lanes. As such, improvements at the east end (east of the Bear Creek Parkway/Redmond Way intersection) have been deferred to a later study.
6. The assumptions built into the traffic forecasts reflect the most recent land use estimates for the Downtown area. Land use trends will ultimately change from year to year (e.g., the potential vacation of AT&T Wireless), but planning-level projects necessarily involve assumptions regarding future development patterns and traffic conditions. Because an extension of Bear Creek Parkway is one of the recommended improvements in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan, it is part of the overall system proposed by the Master Plan.
7. See Response #6.

Response to Suzanne Querry (Comment #21)

1. Your concern for the open space and heron rookery is noted. Although Alternative 1 would impact the open space, none of the alternatives would use property from the heron rookery (the former Safeco parcel). Impacts to herons have been considered and documented in consultation with wildlife regulatory and preservation agencies. Discussion of impacts on the open space and heron rookery are included in the *Plants, Animals, and Wetlands* (pages 3-21 to 3-34) and *Recreation* (pages 3-72 to 3-80) sections of the Draft SEIS.
2. None of the alternatives are anticipated to negatively impact water quality in the Sammamish River. The stormwater system would be designed according to the Washington State Department of Ecology's *Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington* (2001). Water would be treated with a series of biofiltration swales, wet ponds, and/or other methods. Salmon habitat is not anticipated to be adversely affected. If construction of the new stormwater system is subject to permitting by the US Army Corps of Engineers, a Biological Evaluation/Assessment would be completed to identify any impacts to federally protected plant and wildlife species.
3. See Response #1.

4. The Draft SEIS included assessment of the impacts of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension project on the Redmond Town Center Open Space and the heron rookery, both from a recreational and a wildlife habitat perspective. The Final SEIS includes additional discussion of these impacts (Chapter 3). The level of information presented in the SEIS was sufficient to compare the impacts of the various alternatives.

Should the Bear Creek Parkway project should be subject to permitting by a federal agency such as the US Army Corps of Engineers, a Biological Evaluation/Assessment (BE/A) would be completed for compliance with the Endangered Species Act. The BE/A would describe the impacts of the Preferred Alternative on any threatened or endangered species or their habitat, including salmon or any protected species utilizing the open space.

5. The assumptions built into the traffic forecasts reflect the most recent land use estimates for the Downtown area. Land use trends will ultimately change from year to year (e.g., the potential vacation of AT&T Wireless), but planning-level projects necessarily involve assumptions regarding future development patterns and traffic conditions. Because an extension of Bear Creek Parkway is one of the recommended improvements in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan, it is part of the overall system proposed by the Master Plan.
6. See Response #5.

Response to Rick Beason, Macerich Management Company (Comment #22)

1. This letter (as well as all other letters received) has been entered into the record of comment for this project.
2. Potential signals along Bear Creek Parkway (e.g., at 166th Ave NE) would be considered during project design. Based on projected volumes at the Bear Creek Parkway/166th Ave NE intersection, future signalization of this location may be pursued. With regard to the east end of Bear Creek Parkway, improvements to the (eastern) Bear Creek Parkway/Redmond Way intersection are recommended in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan. These improvements were assumed to be in place as part of the SEIS evaluation, in order to accommodate the anticipated increase in peak-hour traffic volumes and the shift of the major through-traffic stream to Bear Creek Parkway. To provide additional capacity on Redmond Way (SR 202), the bridge crossing just west of the SR 520 interchange would require physical widening for new lanes. As such, improvements at the east end (east of the Bear Creek Parkway/Redmond Way intersection) have been deferred to a later study.
3. Vehicle stacking on Bear Creek Parkway was addressed in the technical analysis. Even with the reconfigured Bear Creek Parkway/Redmond Way intersection, noticeable traffic congestion would still develop during the peak-hour period, but could be maintained at tolerable levels. Signals could be placed near the Red Robin or Larry's Market driveway if warranted, to facilitate pedestrian crossings and access from adjacent businesses.
4. A signalized intersection could be provided at Bear Creek Parkway and 164th Avenue NE at the southern entrance to Redmond Town Center. The need for this and other signals will be further assessed during the design stages. Additional signals would be provided as warranted as other projects in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan (including the extension of 164th Avenue NE to the north) are implemented.

5. It is true that Bear Creek Parkway currently functions at an acceptable level of service and will continue to do so for the near term. However, future traffic projections and modeling show that increased traffic on Bear Creek Parkway will cause delays and congestion in the future if the facility is not widened, particularly after improvements are made to the intersections on either end.
6. Your preference for the 164th Avenue NE extension as a priority is noted. The City of Redmond staff and City Council are responsible for making future decisions on implementation of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension and other projects.
7. Your willingness to “work with the City to refine” Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 is noted. Your opposition to Alternative 1 is noted.
8. Your opposition to Alternative 1 because “it diverts traffic too far away from the downtown retail core... (and) violates the Open Space classification for this area” is noted. Discussion of traffic patterns and open space are included in the Transportation (pages 3-85 to 3-123) and Recreation (pages 3-72 to 3-80) sections of the Draft SEIS.
9. Access to Redmond Town Center at NE 74th Street would be maintained and the signal at Leary Way/162nd Avenue NE would remain. A signal at NE 74th Street/162nd Avenue NE would likely not be needed due to the reduction in volume through this intersection. Access to the pump house for maintenance would also be maintained. Costs to maintain this access are included in the costs for Alternative 1. The portion of the existing Bear Creek Parkway south of the pump house would be removed. Traffic conditions would be revisited if and when a NE 72nd Street connection to W. Lake Sammamish Parkway is considered.
10. Relocation of the existing ponds is an impact of Alternative 1 and is discussed in the Draft SEIS. All of the build alternatives would involve construction of a new water quality pond. Your comment that Alternative 1 “focuses on pass-by traffic rather than the City’s downtown transportation needs” is noted. The purpose of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension is to provide an alternate route for east-west traffic in order to improve transportation and access in the Downtown core.
11. Impacts to businesses along 159th Place NE are anticipated under Alternative 1 and are discussed in the *Land Use* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-44 to 3-56).
12. See Response #4
13. Any use of the Open Space would be coordinated through the appropriate owners.
14. Your acceptance of Alternative 2 is noted.
15. Impacts to the Saturday Market are part of Alternative 2. Impacts to this area would be minimized as much as possible. The proposed location of the Bear Creek Parkway/162nd Avenue intersection is shifted away from the current location in order to avoid impacts on the heron rookery. Moving the intersection closer to its existing location would create an undesirable curve configuration, which would require a significant reduction in speed and could be a potential safety issue for vehicles.
16. See Response #4
17. Your acceptance of Alternative 3 is noted. Analysis shows that Alternative 3 does not provide an effective connection for east-west traffic. More detail is presented in the *Transportation* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-85 to 3-123).

18. See Response #4
19. Your preference for Alternative 4 is noted.
20. See Responses #4 and #15
21. See Response #2 (regarding east end improvements)
22. Your desire to partner with the City on a solution is noted and appreciated.

Response to Frank Anderson (Comment #23)

1. Comment noted.
2. The impacts to the property at 16141 Cleveland Street under Alternatives 3 and 4 are noted. Business owners affected by the project will be compensated for any property or structural loss according to fair market value. Impacts on this and other businesses are discussed in the *Land Use* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-44 to 3-56).
3. The Preferred Alternative's specific impacts on this and all properties will be discussed with individual landowners during right-of-way acquisition. The City will work with individual landowners to determine if the property acquired will leave a developable parcel and if not, the entire parcel will be acquired. Compensation for the acquisition will be done according to standard City practice and will reflect fair market value. The estimate of \$40/square foot was used for estimating purposes only and provides a reasonable way to compare alternatives.
4. Your preference for a park at the former King County Shop Site location is noted. Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 all use a portion of this parcel. Any remaining portion of this parcel could be integrated into the future BNSF open space/trail area.
5. Your comment that the use of the 161st Avenue NE alignment for the Bear Creek Parkway connection would "adversely impact the efforts of the planning commission and the comprehensive plan to create a pedestrian oriented ambience and "livable core" in the Old Town District" is noted. In Alternative 3, the alignment is proposed as five lanes and would bring more traffic through Downtown. In Alternative 4 the northern connection is proposed as three lanes and would be consistent with a smaller facility more designed for local traffic and pedestrians/bicycles.
6. The City Council is responsible for making the future decision on when to implement the Bear Creek Parkway Extension. The City will pursue acquisition of the required right-of-way as soon as possible after selection of an alignment and funding of the project.

Response to William Garing, Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce (Comment #24)

1. Your support of the concepts in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan is noted.
2. Your support of a Bear Creek Parkway Extension is noted.
3. Your support for Alternative 4 is noted.
4. Logical termini for project development are defined as (1) rational end points for a transportation improvement, and (2) rational end points for a review of the environmental impacts. Termini are commonly points of major traffic generation, especially intersecting roadways. This is due to the fact that traffic generators usually determine the size and type of facility being proposed. Choosing a corridor of sufficient length to look at all impacts need

not preclude staged construction. Therefore, related improvements within a transportation facility should be evaluated as one project, rather than selecting termini based on what is programmed as short-range improvements. Construction may then be "staged," or programmed for shorter sections or discrete construction elements as funding permits.

The termini of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension project are logical in that the project extends an arterial facility between two major connecting roadways (Leary Way and Redmond Way). Alternative 1 also proposes a new alignment for a portion of the existing Bear Creek Parkway, but does not change the functional termini. The review of environmental impacts extended beyond this immediate area to encompass the western end of Downtown (as shown in Figure 1.1 in the Draft SEIS). The new Bear Creek Parkway is proposed to have two lanes in each direction of travel. It is assumed that the entire length of Bear Creek Parkway will be four to five lanes, as laid out in the Redmond Comprehensive Plan (Transportation Facility Plan #RED-TFP-050b) and the Downtown Transportation Master Plan.

5. Improvements to the intersection of Bear Creek Parkway and Redmond Way (on the east end) were included in the Downtown Transportation Master Plan. For the future analysis year in the SEIS, these improvements are assumed to be in place. More specific analysis of these "east end" improvements were conducted as part of the Downtown Transportation Master Plan, and will be revisited when the City decides to conduct environmental studies of these projects.
6. One of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension's stated purposes is to allow the future conversion of the Redmond/Cleveland one-way couplet to two-way operations. This conversion is assumed in the traffic analysis for Bear Creek Parkway. The cumulative impact of the two projects is anticipated to be reduced capacity and reduced traffic on Redmond Way and Cleveland Street, allowing these facilities to carry primarily local traffic and to be more attractive to pedestrians and bicycles. Impacts to businesses are expected to be positive in that it will be easier for vehicles to park and access these businesses, and more pedestrian and bicycle traffic is expected to increase patronage of these businesses. The changes in traffic patterns are not anticipated to cause any business closures. Redevelopment of the Downtown core is supported by this project, but specific redevelopment plans are beyond the scope of this project. If the City makes a decision to implement two-way operations on Redmond Way and Cleveland Street, a more detailed assessment of impacts and necessary mitigation will be conducted.
7. The concern for business displacements is noted. The opportunity for redevelopment is also noted. Mitigation of business impacts will be through monetary compensation for lost property at fair market value. Displaced businesses will be assisted in finding new locations if desired. It is not anticipated that a loss or change of these businesses would significantly impact the City's sales tax receipts. Should these businesses choose not to relocate or relocate outside Redmond, the existing customer base is expected to utilize other businesses in Redmond.
8. Current and historical traffic count data indicates that the PM peak-hour period (4 PM to 6 PM) represents the most concentrated traffic volume period during a typical weekday. Mid-day volumes (lunch period) are indeed significant, particularly on Redmond Way, but overall in Downtown the PM peak period shows the highest volumes. Table 2.1 shows recent traffic counts along Cleveland Street and Redmond Way.
9. Your comments are appreciated.

Table 2.1: Recent Traffic Volumes on Cleveland Street and Redmond Way

	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour	Daily Total
Cleveland Street East of Leary Way (eastbound)			
Tuesday 11/11/02	881 (11:00-12:00)	1184 (17:05-18:05)	12590
Wednesday 11/12/02	951 (11:00-12:00)	1215 (17:20-18:20)	13246
Thursday 11/13/02	926 (11:00-12:00)	1179 (17:20-18:20)	12360
Cleveland Street West of Leary Way (eastbound)			
Tuesday 11/11/03	889 (11:00-12:00)	1086 (17:05-18:05)	12656
Wednesday 11/12/03	958 (10:55-11:55)	1115 (16:55-17:55)	12964
Thursday 11/13/03	861 (11:00-12:00)	1060 (16:15-17:15)	12148
Redmond Way East of Leary Way (westbound)			
Tuesday 11/11/03	1073 (11:00-12:00)	1160 (12:05-13:05)	13992
Wednesday 11/12/03	1019 (11:00-12:00)	1112 (12:35-13:35)	14368
Thursday 11/13/03	1016 (11:00-12:00)	1121 (12:20-13:20)	14154
Redmond Way West of Leary Way (westbound)			
Tuesday 01/13/04	1134 (11:00-12:00)	1260 (15:35-16:35)	15523
Wednesday 01/14/04	1099 (11:00-12:00)	1261 (12:10-13:10)	15324
Thursday 01/15/04	1061 (11:00-12:00)	1233 (12:10-13:10)	15457

Source: City of Redmond

Response to Eric Miller, City of Bellevue (Comment #25)

1. The existence of the “Interlocal Agreement between the Cities of Bellevue and Redmond Regarding Land Use Planning and the Funding and Construction of Transportation Improvements in the Bel-Red/Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS) Area” is noted.
2. The Bear Creek Parkway Extension will not preclude implementation of any of the BROTS projects, including the RED-BROTS-86.0 W. Lake Sammamish Parkway/Leary Way intersection or RED-BROTS-39.1 W. Lake Sammamish Parkway/Town Center connection. Discussion of this latter project is provided in the Technical Memo entitled *Task B3: Assessment of a Bear Creek Parkway Bypass via West Lake Sammamish Parkway*, prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff in June 2003 and included as Appendix C of the Final SEIS. This project is also discussed in Comment #18 above. Alternative 1 would partially implement RED-BROTS-86.0 in that it would widen Leary Way from W. Lake Sammamish Parkway to the new Bear Creek Parkway Extension in the configuration noted (left/through-left/through/through-right).
3. All of the build alternatives are consistent with the BROTS agreement.

Response to David Rossiter (Comment #26)

1. Your preference for Alternative 2 is noted.
2. Your dislike of Alternative 1 is noted.

3. Your acceptance of Alternative 4 is noted. The north-south connection would provide an additional connection into Downtown, for buses and local vehicle traffic, pedestrians, and bicycles. Your concern for the cost is noted.

Response to Stephanie Kramer, Assistant State Archeologist, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation (Comment #27)

1. Your concurrence with the recommendation for avoidance or survey and/or testing and mitigation of the known archaeological site in the project area is noted. The City will ensure a qualified archeologist performs the work and obtains the appropriate permits from the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation. The comment period for tribes is noted.
2. The need to survey the project area for the chosen alternative prior to construction is noted. Tribal consultation has been initiated with the Snoqualmie, Muckleshoot, and Tulalip Tribes (see documentation in Appendix A of the Draft SEIS). To date, no traditional cultural resource issues have been identified.
3. Portions of the project area have been surveyed in the past for cultural resources. These reports are on file at the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation. However, portions of the project area have not been surveyed so a complete survey of the preferred alignment will be conducted. Historic property inventory forms will also be submitted as appropriate for the Preferred Alternative.
4. If federal funds or permits are involved, the City will ensure compliance with Section 106 and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR 800. The City will undertake consultations on the Area of Potential Effect with the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation should compliance with Section 106 be required.
5. If additional information becomes available it will be submitted to the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Response to Laurie D'Alessandro (Comment #28 – received at Open House)

1. Impacts to the property at 7725 159th Place NE under Alternatives 1, 2, and 4 are noted. Specific impacts to this and all properties resulting from the Preferred Alternative will be discussed with individual landowners during right-of-way acquisition. The City will work with individual landowners to determine if the property acquired will leave a developable parcel and if not, the entire parcel will be acquired. Compensation for the acquisition will be done according to standard City practice and will reflect fair market value. Discussion of impacts to this and other businesses are included in the *Land Use* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-44 to 3-56).
2. The importance of choosing an alignment for Bear Creek Parkway is noted. Specific impacts to this and all properties resulting from the Preferred Alternative will be discussed with individual landowners during right-of-way acquisition. The City will work with individual landowners to determine if the property acquired will leave a developable parcel and if not, the entire parcel will be acquired. Compensation for the acquisition will be done according to standard City practice and will reflect fair market value. The City will pursue acquisition of these properties as soon as possible after selection of an alignment and funding of the project.

**Response to Kris Colt, Redmond Trails Commission
(Comment #29 – received at the Open House)**

1. Your preference for Alternatives 2 and 4 is noted. The crossing at the future BNSF trail under Alternative 4 will be designed during the BNSF Trail project to ensure the safety of pedestrians and other trail users.

Response to Bill Blackburn (Comment #30 – received at the Open House)

1. Your preference for Alternative 4 is noted. Your preference for phased implementation is also noted. Opportunities for design and construction phasing will be explored during project implementation. Your comment “What is the cost of lost businesses and lost business if nothing is done to make access to downtown easier for our citizens and others?” is noted. One of the goals of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension is to provide an alternate route for east-west traffic, thereby increasing access to streets in the Downtown for local traffic, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Response to Duane Nakano (Comment #31 – received at the Open House)

1. The proposed improvements to SR 520 are included in the travel demand models for Bear Creek Parkway. These models still show a need for the new roadway even with the improvements to SR 520.
2. Your concern that “the improvement in travel times east-west through Redmond of one or two minutes in each direction compared to the “No Build” alternative is so insignificant the \$35 million would be better spent doing other projects in Redmond...” is noted. Your desire to see other projects implemented in Downtown is noted. The choice of an alignment for Bear Creek Parkway does not preclude these other improvements.
3. Studies have been done on the impacts of converting the Redmond/Cleveland couplet prior to implementing the Bear Creek Parkway Extension. These studies are documented in the technical memo entitled *Task B5: Conversion of Redmond/Cleveland Couplet Prior to Implementation of a Downtown Bypass*, prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff in 2003 and included as Appendix D in the Final SEIS. These previous studies indicate that converting the couplet first would create significant traffic congestion in Downtown. However, the City feels the prudent course of action would be to choose an alignment for Bear Creek Parkway now and decide on priorities for implementation (taking into consideration the couplet conversion and other elements of the Downtown Transportation Master Plan) as the next step.
4. Planning-level projects necessarily involve assumptions regarding future development patterns and traffic conditions. For this project’s traffic analysis, the planned improvements to SR 520 were assumed to be in place.

Response to Anonymous (Comment #32 – received at the Open House)

1. Your preference for the No Build Alternative because of the environmental impacts is noted. Your desire for other modes of transportation is noted. Your desire for phasing of any eventual improvements is noted.
2. See Response #1.

Response to Lisa Tracy (Comment #33 – received at the Open House)

1. Your concern for the project cost is noted.
2. Your concern with the business impacts of Alternative 1 is noted. Specific impacts to this and all properties required by the Preferred Alternative will be discussed with individual landowners during right-of-way acquisition. The City will work with individual landowners to determine if the property acquired will leave a developable parcel and if not, the entire parcel will be acquired. Compensation for the acquisition will be done according to standard City practice and will reflect fair market value. Impacts to this and other businesses are discussed in the *Land Use* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-44 to 3-56). Parking impacts are also discussed in this section. Your comment that the No Action will not affect the open space is noted.
3. Relocation and modification of the existing water quality ponds as part of Alternative 1 is discussed in the *Water* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-13 to 3-20). Impacts to wildlife are also discussed, and additional discussion of these impacts is presented in Chapter 3 of the Final SEIS.
4. The numbers of businesses impacted under each of the alternatives is presented in the Draft SEIS. These are estimates provided for the purposes of comparison and the actual numbers may change (likely decrease) as the project moves into design. Specific impacts to all properties required by the Preferred Alternative will be discussed with individual landowners during right-of-way acquisition. Compensation for the acquisition will be done according to standard City practice and will reflect fair market value.
5. Your concern with the impacts of Alternative 2 is noted. Impacts to the Saturday Market, the School District building, and the Workshop Tavern will be minimized as much as possible. The proposed location of the Bear Creek Parkway/162nd Avenue intersection is shifted away from the current location in order to avoid impacts to the heron rookery. Moving the intersection closer to its existing location would either cause the alignment to pass through the heron rookery, or create an undesirable curve configuration that requires a significant reduction in speed and could be a potential safety issue for vehicles.
6. See Response #5. Your concern for the traffic patterns under Alternative 3 is noted. Traffic patterns are further discussed in the *Transportation* section of the Draft SEIS (pages 3-85 to 3-123).
7. Your dislike of Alternative 4 is noted. It is anticipated that traffic desiring to connect to Redmond Way on the west end will follow the new east-west connection and not follow the northern spur into Downtown. The north-south connection provided as part of Alternative 4 is intended to be a smaller facility primarily for local traffic, transit, pedestrians, and bicycles.
8. The City Council has not yet finalized the decision to implement Bear Creek Parkway as the first project. The City feels the prudent course of action would be to choose an alignment for Bear Creek Parkway now, and decide on priorities for implementation (taking into consideration the couplet conversion and other elements of the Downtown Transportation Master Plan) as the next step. Your desire for a modified version of Alternative 3 is noted.